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UM breaks into top 30 in QS Asia rankings

Overall, 17 out of 21 public universities have improved

BY RAM ANAND

KUALA LUMPUR: Universiti Malaya (UM) broke into QS Quacquarelli Symonds Asia's top 30 rankings as Malaysian universities across the board improved their rankings in the latest QS evaluation for 2015 released yesterday.

UM climbed three places to finish 29th in the table, while Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) also climbed from 57th place to break into the top 50, by ranking 49th.

Overall, 17 out of Malaysia's 21 public universities had improved on their previous year rankings, with only three dropping and one unchanged.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) were other Malaysian varsities in the top 100.

Ben Sowter, head of QS research, said it was clear that progress was taking place in Malaysia, especially in terms of its growing reputation in international academia.

"Malaysia has great ambitions and places education and innovation as

among top priorities on its agenda."

UM improved significantly in the faculty-student ratio indicator, ranking 11th in Asia, and 19th in the international faculty indicator.

USM, which broke into the top 50 in Asia, improved in several indicators — academic reputation, faculty-student ratio, papers per faculty and international faculty.

While the QS rankings have been frequently cited by the Education Ministry as proof that local universities are world class, they have, however, been described by the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings as employing a "very weak and simplistic methodology".

THE editor Phil Baty told The Malaysian Insider previously that the ministry's reliance on QS rankings had created an "overoptimistic, distorted" idea of how local universities actually fare compared with competitors around the world.

Malaysian universities have often fared poorly in the THE rankings and some have stopped submitting data

to THE. The London-based QS has agreed with THE that its rankings should not be used as the only measure of quality of Malaysian institutions.

Sowter said QS rankings are only one range of publicly available measures, and cautioned universities and policymakers to combine data from various sources to form an accurate diagnosis of universities' performance.

"We strongly discourage anyone from making important choices on the basis of only one input," Sowter said.

On Tuesday, Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh was reported as saying that while he agreed the QS rankings are not the sole measure of quality, they remained a gauge of the quality of a tertiary institution.

"People still talk about QS ranking. When we look at the university, we still go to QS ranking, not just in terms of university but also subject ranking," Idris was quoted as saying by the media on Tuesday.

— *The Malaysian Insider*

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MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES IN TOP 300 OF QS UNIVERSITY RANKINGS: ASIA 2015			
2015	2014	Institution	Overall score
29	32	 Universiti Malaya (UM)	84.8
49	57	 Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	69.4
56=	56	 Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	66.4
61=	66	 Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	64.5
66	76	 Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	63.4
151-160	145	 International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)	42.1
151-160	191-200	 Universiti Teknologi Petronas (Petronas)	41.2
191-200	201-250	 Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	35.7
201-250	201-250	 Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	34.5
201-250	201-250	 University of Malaysia Sabah (UMS)	32.8
201-250	201-250	 University Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP)	31.7
201-250	201-250	 Multimedia University (MMU)	31.3
201-250	201-250	 Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)	30.9
201-250	-	 Taylor's University	29.7
251-300	251-300	 Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)	27.4
251-300	251-300	 Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM)	25.6
251-300	251-300	 LimKokWing University of Creative Technology	25.3
251-300	251-300	 Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)	25.3
251-300	251-300	 Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN)	24.8
251-300	301+	 UCSI University	24.2
251-300	301+	 Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)	23.6

SOURCE: QS Quacquarelli Symonds 2004-2015 www.TopUniversities.com

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